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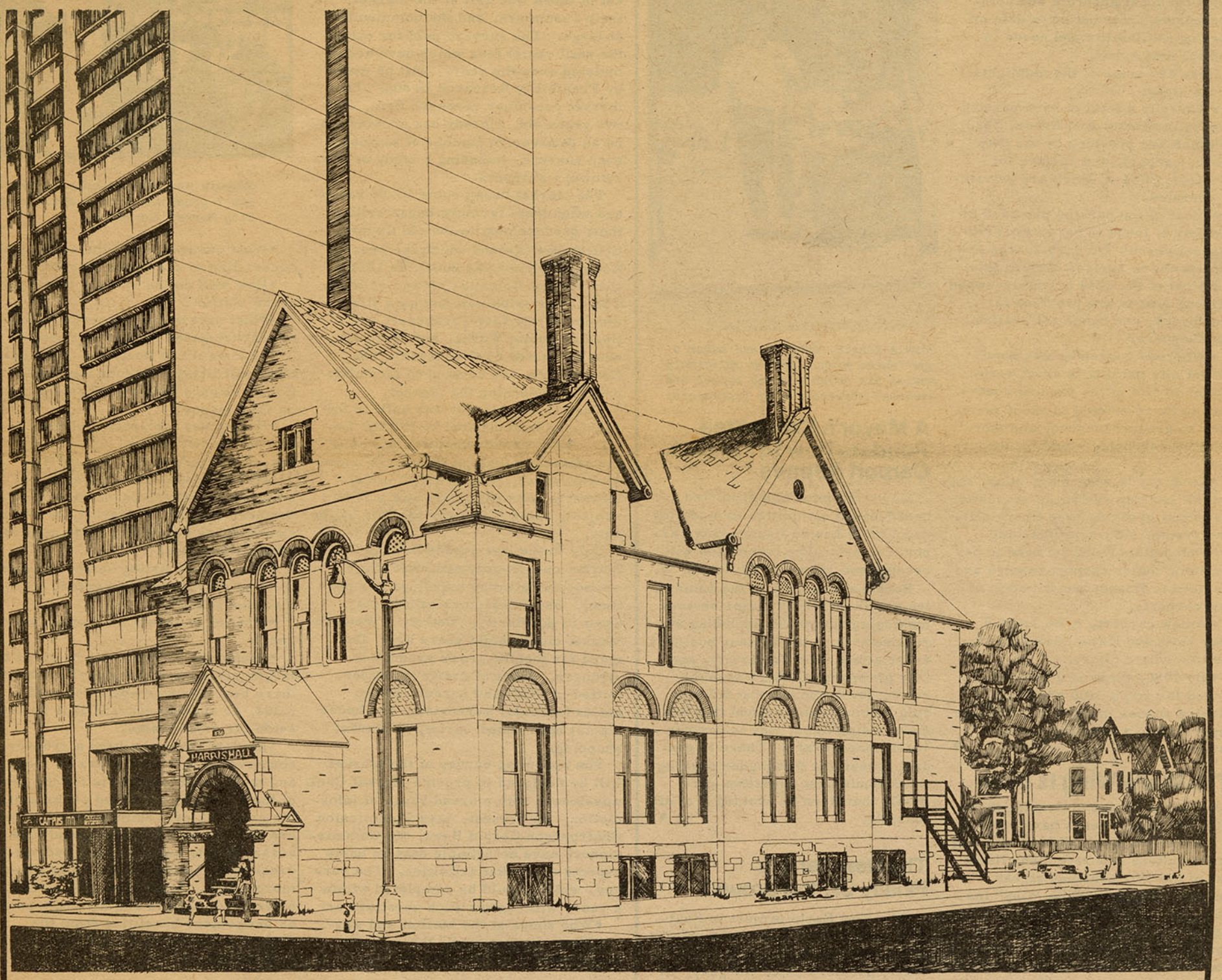
Ann Arbor Observer

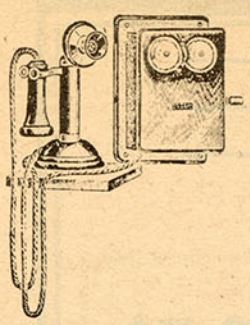
Ann Arbor, Michigan | SERVING CENTRAL ANN ARBOR | August, 1976



Striking architectural contrasts are a special attribute of central Ann Arbor. Here the crisp vertical lines of the Campus Inn are juxtaposed with the heavily detailed Romanesque style of Harris Hall, one of Ann Arbor's 19th century landmarks.

Despite its name and appearance, Harris Hall has never been owned by the University, although it was leased from 1946 to 1974 by the University as headquarters for the Michigan Marching Band. Harris Hall was built in 1886 as a student center by the local Episcopal Parish and named after Samuel S. Harris, Episcopal Bishop of Michigan. Since 1974, it has been owned by the Word of God organization and currently houses the Charasmatic Renewal Services.

The drawing is by local artist Susan Price. Those interested in prints can contact the Observer, 502 East Huron.



Update

The AAT Parking Study Is Completed

A new study of downtown parking has recently been completed. The study, prepared by Carol Sullivan with the assistance of Denise Griffin of Ann Arbor Tomorrow, provides the most accurate and comprehensive information to date on parking availability and needs in central Ann Arbor.

Here are some of the highlights of the study:

- There is a total of 5566 parking spaces in central Ann Arbor, 3422 of which are provided by the City (curb, carport, and surface lot parking), 2044 of which are privately operated.
- Most of the parking provided by the City is found in carports (1790 spaces) versus 796 curb spaces and 836 spaces in surface parking lots.
- Most of the 2044 privately-owned parking spaces are provided for employees, and hence not available for shoppers.
- Whereas currently only about 30% of city parking is short-term, closer to 50% of the parking spaces need to be restricted to short-term use, so greater turnover and more downtown shopping would be encouraged.
- Contrary to what many think, the overall parking system is presently just about breaking even financially. The system's current financial problems stem from the need to pay for some major carport repairs and the need to finance construction of new carports.
- A new carport, to be located near Main and Huron, is needed in the immediate future.
- By 1990, there will probably be a need for some 2500 additional parking spaces in central Ann Arbor, representing a need for five new carports. •

The White Wing Is Back

Advances in street cleaning technology in recent years have resulted in huge machines capable of cleaning street gutters at a rate many times that of the old-fashioned street cleaner. But the "White Wing" (as these men were once called) is back, and for good reason, as there are many nooks and crannies in central Ann Arbor that the massive new street cleaners are unable to reach. Besides picking up litter on sidewalks and curbsides, the White Wing will remove weeds (which are a real problem along such streets as Ashley).

The City employee who will be providing this significant new service is Jessie Kozart. He was about to be laid off due to City fiscal belt-tightening when a Federal grant came through which permitted funding this type of job.

Mr. Kozart will be spending approximately two days a week in the Main St. area, two days in the State St. area, and one day a week in the South University area. Next time you see him you could let him know you appreciate this added attention the City is paying to our downtown environment. •

Jessie Kozart, central Ann Arbor's new "White Wing," posing obligingly beside his movable trash barrel and assorted streetcleaning implements.

A Mayor's Committee Ponders How to Finance Carport Repairs

Mayor Wheeler has appointed a broad-based committee to study the problem of how to finance City carport repairs. The committee will recommend solutions by August 30.

Because members of the committee are from all the major sectors making up downtown, including representatives of the various business associations, the University, and City government, there is some reason for optimism that a financing formula can be found that will make a significant rise in parking rates unnecessary. There is general agreement that higher parking rates would hurt downtown and should therefore be avoided if at all possible. •

The New Earle Is Finally Off the Ground

The New Earle project is finally moving. After many long months of negotiations between the New Earle partners (Rick Burgess, Ernie Harburg, Dave Rock, and Dennis Webster) and five local lending institutions, arrangements for financing the renovation of the former Earle Hotel at Washington and Ashley have been finalized. Construction contracts with De-Koning Construction Co. have been signed, and work may be underway by September.

A basement jazz club will be the first phase; apartments and an outdoor courtyard-restaurant will come later. Construction of an entryway will temporarily displace Sixteen Hands crafts shop in the old hotel's ground floor. •

More Crafts? More Stalls? More Parking?

The City Market Will Be Studied; Major Policy Decisions Will Come

The growing popularity of the City Market (better known as the Farmers Market) in recent years has produced a variety of alternatives for the Market's future. Such are the complexities of these various options that a $12,250 survey has been commissioned to determine the views about the Market of those who sell at the Market, their customers, and the community at large. The survey, paid for out of the stall rental fees which have accumulated over the years, will be made by Feasibility Research Group. This market consumer research firm, only two years old, already has accomplished an impressive number of similar such surveys, including a study of Kerrytown's shoppers.

The Market began some 55-60 years ago when local farmers began selling their produce next to the old County Courthouse (around which the present County Building was built). In 1922 a City Market Commission was created. The Commission now numbers five members (the City Treasurer, the Head of Public Works, and three citizens appointed by the mayor). The Commission was created to formulate policies governing the Market.

The present Market was built in the 1930's on land donated by Gottlob Luick, whose lumber company occupied the adjacent buildings which now make up Kerrytown. Construction of the Market's open-air stalls was a WPA project, using materials paid for by the City.

Only in the last decade has the City Market consistently attracted large crowds on Saturday mornings (its peak time). Several factors caused its boost in popularity. Detroit's Western Market closed eight years ago. Demand for locally-grown produce is stronger. Sales of crafts (first permitted in 1967) and nursery-grown plants (annuals, perennials, and house plants) have added variety to Market shopping.

The upcoming survey of the Market will be designed to provide Market Commissioners with a broad range of information. At present, says Commission Chairperson Gerald Rees, the Commissioners have no reliable data on basic aspects of Market activities. The survey, which should be completed within a year, will answer such questions as:

- Who shops at the Market and why?
- What changes would the growers like to see in the Market?

Growers and craftspeople. There isn't presently enough space at the City Market for both.

- What changes would the crafts producers like to see in the Market?
- How well do the various items sell at the Market?
- What part of a producer's income do Market-based profits represent?

The answers to these and other questions will likely influence the Market Commission's future policy decisions on such issues as:

- How to use the space now occupied by two adjacent houses recently purchased by the Market. Should it be parking for customers, parking for growers, an extension of the present northern wing of the Market, or an enclosed space permitting more comfortable winter sales?
- Should the existing number of stalls (135) be increased, decreased, or remain the same?
- What days should the Market stay open?
- Should the craftspeople be given a larger percentage of the stalls, should there be a separate space for crafts sales, or should separate days be set aside for crafts sales?

This last issue has been a growing controversy in recent years as more and more craftspeople vie for the seven of the 135 stalls reserved permanently for crafts sales. Some crafts producers see this as a grossly inequitable arrangement, and they have become increasingly insistent about being given more space. Some growers, on the other hand, tend to see the craftspeople as newcomers benefiting from the crowds it has taken the growers years to generate. •

Ann Arbor Observer
SERVING CENTRAL ANN ARBOR

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Update / Continued

The Salvation Army Is Leaving Downtown

The Salvation Army, traditionally associated with downtown areas, is planning to move its headquarters and social center into a residential area. The new headquarters, which will be completed in one and one half years, is located eleven blocks west of Main Street, at Arbana and West Huron.

The Army has been in downtown Ann Arbor for 80 years, having been founded as a religious denomination only 31 years before it came to town. It was begun by an ex-Methodist minister who has a special concern for the urban poor. His name was William Booth and he lived in London in the mid-nineteenth century. He left his denomination in 1865 because it would not allow him to minister to those living in a poor section of London. He formed the Christian Mission (later named the Salvation Army) along the strict, authoritarian lines of a military army to minister to those in physical as well as spiritual need.

The Army came to the U.S. in 1880 and was a tremendous success proliferating rapidly over large sections of the country. It came to Ann Arbor in 1896, initially occupying a storefront downtown (the typical way the Army starts operations in a new city). In 1926 the Army's present facility at Washington and Fifth Ave. was built.

Lt. Col. Harold Crowell, head of the Ann Arbor contingent of the Army, offered several reasons for the Army's plan to abandon the fifty-year-old landmark:

- The present three-story building has no elevator and is therefore a difficult building to use for senior citizens, who represent a growing sector served by the Army.
- The amount of space in the present building (9000 square feet) is too small for current needs.
- More Salvation Army users these days live in outlying areas and use their cars to get to Army headquarters. The proposed new facility will have nineteen parking spaces exclusively for Salvation Army visitors, while the present site offers no such parking. Demand for more land for parking and expansion has driven several central city churches out into residential areas: the Unitarians in the 1950's, Zion Lutheran in the 1950's, and Grace Bible and Second Baptist in the 1970's.

Asked if the move from downtown would in any way reduce the amount of service the Army has traditionally provided to transients, Lt. Col. Crowell said that no drop in the number coming to the Army in need of food, clothing, or shelter is anticipated. He explained that it has been the Army's experience that those in need will seek out the Salvation Army, no matter where it is located. The Army's Red Shield Store at Ann and Main streets will continue in operation and will be a downtown source of referral for those in need.

The Army is presently waging a campaign throughout the community to raise $850,000 to pay for the proposed new facility. •

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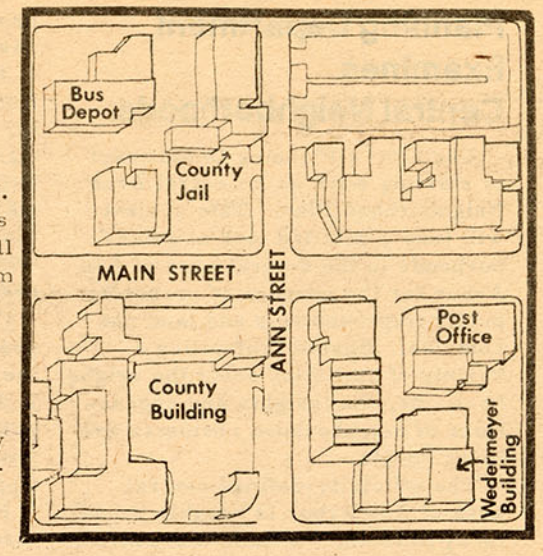
The County Considers Where to Build Next



City of Ann Arbor Planning Department

Decisions by the County's Board of Commissioners which are likely in the coming months will have a significant impact on downtown Ann Arbor. Those decisions concern how the County will cope with its chronic and growing shortage of office and courtroom space.

The present County Building, with its 60,000 square feet of usable space, will within five years have only enough room to house the courtrooms. In fifteen years it is projected that at least another 100,000 square feet of space will be needed for central County facilities.

The County's space shortage has been acute for some time now. Already basement hallways of the County Building are being pressed into service as storage space. Because it typically takes from four to five years from planning to completion of a new building, there is an urgent need to establish some kind of direction concerning where and what to build.

A major reason the Commissioners have delayed a final decision is the number of options being considered about where to build the new facility. One option is to expand court and office facilities outside of Ann Arbor's downtown. This solution is particularly attractive to many non-Ann Arbor Commissioners who cite the problems with accessibility and parking at the County Building's present location. While this option is still alive, it is not likely. In a February, 1976 survey of County Commissioners (which 13 of 15 Commissioners completed), eleven favored downtown Ann Arbor as the site of general office space for the County, and twelve favored downtown as the site for the Circuit-Probate Courts.

Another difficulty in setting out concrete plans for expansion has been the question of whether the County should and could join with the City of Ann Arbor and build a city-county building in the area around the County Building and City Hall. Within fifteen years it is projected that the City will need an additional 68,000 square feet of office space. It would be more efficient for the City as well as the County to solve their building problems by building a jointly-used structure. While the County has been actively interested in this option, the City Council has yet to indicate much interest in such a joint project. The possibility is still alive, however, that the City will get together with the County at least for certain building projects. While a jointly-used office building is not likely, the City is presently concerned about finding space for more courtrooms, the Fire Department, and the Police Department. A parking structure is also needed. City and County officials will be getting together in the near future to see if a jointly-used structure could benefit both parties.

If an additional downtown County Building addition is to go up, it is almost certain that an accompanying parking structure of at least 450 space spaces will also be built. County architect Elmore Fowlie favors a unified design whereby a County office building would be built on top of such a structure. The design would allow future vertical expansion as needed.

For such a structure to be most efficient, an entire block would be required. The two most likely blocks for such a building would be the block now housing the jailhouse (which in any case is likely to be torn down) and the block housing the Main St. Post Office (which will be moving to the new Federal Building in the spring).

The jailhouse block has two disadvantages. One is that this block also houses the Greyhound Bus Depot, and Greyhound shows no interest in moving. The other is that this block contains prime commercial space which has considerable tax-generating potential for the City. The Post Office block is a more likely candidate for a new County Building. The County already owns the Wedemeyer Building on this block as well as its adjacent parking area. Acquisition of the remaining commercial buildings on the block is not considered a major difficulty. There is a dilemma, however, concerning what to do with the old Post Office.

The County could conceivably obtain the Post Office from the Federal Government at a nominal fee if the building is declared historic and its facade is preserved. Some have suggested that the front facade of the building is well suited as an entrance to a courtroom complex. But looking at the total space needs of the County, the Post Office is too small a unit. Were a combined structure such as Fowlie suggests built, the entire block would have to be cleared. Were this course followed, the Post Office would have to be purchased at market value from the Federal Government.

Commissioner Richard Walterhouse, chairman of the County's Physical Plant Committee, predicts that a final decision on what and where to built will be made within the next six months. •

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Update/ Continued

Planning Department Examines Central Neighborhoods

The City's Planning Department is starting work on a Central Area Neighborhood Plan. This project will take a detailed look at neighborhoods in the central area of Ann Arbor for the purpose of proposing public improvements and land use controls. Besides compiling a variety of statistics about the neighborhoods, the insights and suggestions of neighborhood residents are being sought.

The officially-defined central area of Ann Arbor is roughly bounded by Seventh, Stadium, Ferdon, Cambridge, the Arboretum, the Huron River, and West Summit. It contains over one-third of the city's people (about 36,000) in less than a tenth of its land area (1,418 acres), for a density of over 16,000 people per square mile. That compares with the overall density of cities such as San Francisco, Jersey City, or Brooklyn.

The planning study will try to answer three different kinds of questions:

1. What is the condition of the existing basic public services (streets, lighting, sidewalks, utilities, and parks)? Are changes needed?

2. How do the existing zoning land use control regulations affect neighborhood stability, growth, and conservation? What changes should be made?

3. How can community development (i.e. revenue sharing) funds best be spent to encourage neighborhood conservation? Should any specific programs be designed to accomplish certain goals? Examples would be the concentrated code enforcement program and the proposed Old West Side Historic District ordinance.

The Planning Commission's new Central Area Neighborhood committe, composed of commissioners Carol Jones, Nelson Meade, and Dick Black, will review the plan, make policy decisions, and communicate between the Planning Commission and the Planning Department Staff.

(The Planning Commission is a group of eight citizens appointed by the mayor for three-year terms. It directs Planning Department policy. The Planning Staff is composed of professional planners who implement Commission policy.)

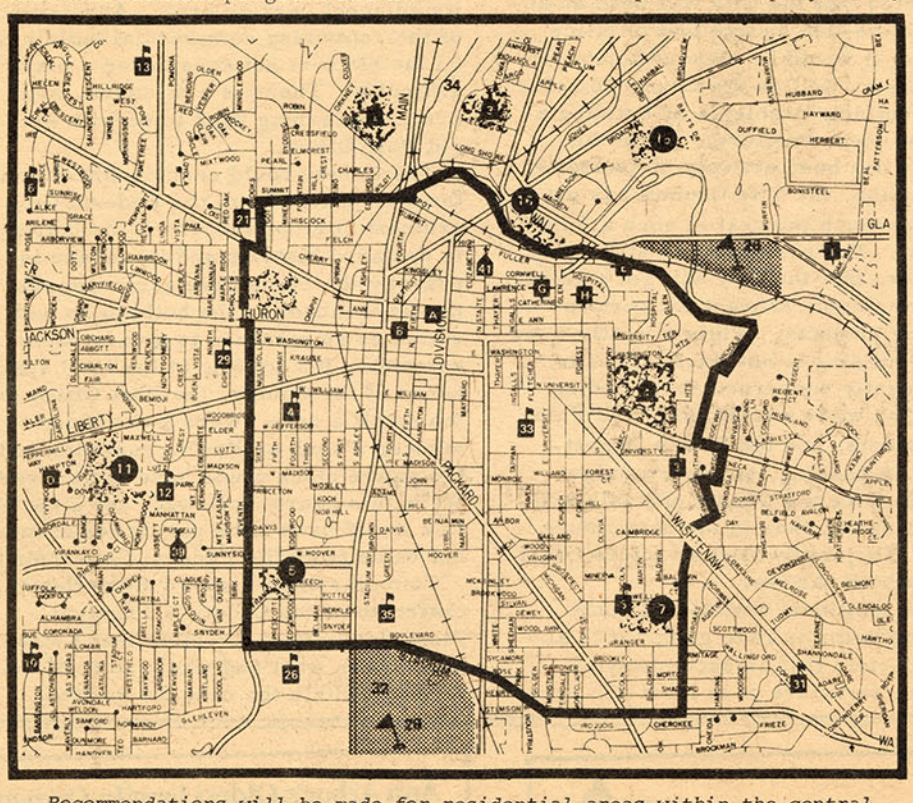
Planning Director Martin Overhiser and staff member Marc Reuter are coordinating the project.

At present, background material on central area neighborhoods is being compiled from existing sources — demographic studies of population statistics, material on zoning and existing land uses, and historical information.

Then conditions and needs in the target neighborhoods will be researched, partly through meetings with neighborhood organizations, and also through reviewing existing surveys of residents and conducting new ones.

Once the planning staff looks at existing neighborhood conditions and works out possible solutions to problems found there, the staff will again consult with neighborhood representatives. Once the plan's recommendations are accepted by the Planning Commission, they will be sent to City Council for final approval as City policy.

The Central Neighborhood Plan will be the second and final part of the Central Area Plan. The report, "Downtown Ann Arbor: A Conservation and Development Strategy," was the first part of the project. •



Recommendations will be made for residential areas within the central area (outlined in black on the map) in the forthcoming Central Area Neighborhood Plan now being prepared by the Ann Arbor Planning Dept.

Rental Housing Inspections Will Increase

Rental housing will be inspected more frequently, thanks to federal dollars from the Community Development Block Grant program. Two laid-off housing inspectors, William Boatwright and Raymond Peterson, have been rehired to concentrate on rental inspections, and more funds have been requested for the program's second year. Additional manpower should bring the inspection frequency somewhat clos closer to the two-year cycle required by law. Right now there is a seven year wait between inspections. •

The Arcade Post Office Has Perhaps Been Saved

The possibility that the Nickels Arcade Post Office might close brought a considerable amount of opposition. Thus far a petition signed by those opposed to the closing of this Post Office has well over 1000 signatures.

The construction of the Federal Building nearby on Liberty, which will include a new post office, has made postal officials consider whether the Arcade facility is necessary.

Contacted July 19, Postmaster Richard Schneeberger told us he views the closing of the Nickels Arcade Post Office as unlikely. He added that the kind of visible opposition as has occurred in the Nickels Post Office case makes it easier to justify the decision to keep it open to his superiors. •

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Update/ Continued

Another Gas Station Is Recycled

Another prominent and long-abandoned gas station, at Detroit and Kingsley, is being reoccupied and renovated. This is part of a promising trend to re-use these small but highly visible structures.

Dave Saffer has moved his custom furniture refinishing business, Old Brick Quality refinishing, into the 25-year-old former filling station, which he bought from Arbor-A, Inc., developers of Kerrytown, this year. Arbor A had hoped to develop the property (at one time they considered the construction of a townhouse complex) but found no viable way of doing so.

Saffer bought his refinishing business from Dick Russell, of Yankee Trader Antiques, four years ago, when it was located at 1010 Pontiac Trail.

The Old Brick's plans for exterior renovation are still tentative. Since the business will only require the space taken up by what used to be the garage portion of the station, Saffer is thinking of setting off the office portion by means of landscaping, with the hope of eventually attracting a small cafe of pot shop to the building.

But for the present he is looking forward to completing repairs and opening in the fall. He surveyed the former gas station's stucco facade from out front and admitted with a smile that under the circumstances he might have to give some thought to changing the name of the business, but for now it will remain Old Brick Quality Refinishing. •

Ann Arbor's Oldest Commercial Is Still in Use

Despite appearances, the St. Vincent De Paul Society thrift shop at 1001 Broadway is open. Its large and distinctive sign, the absence of which has puzzled bypassers for months, was blown down during a particularly bad storm last winter, according to store manager Evelyn Sells.

The thrift shop, associated with St. Thomas Catholic Church, has operated for some nine years, serving the needy in Ann Arbor by offering second-hand goods at low prices. Manager Sells drives her truck around town every Wednesday to pick up donations for the store. She told the Observer that the nine hundred square feet the store now occupies is beginning to prove too small, and she is now looking for a new location, preferably with a one-level space of about 3000 square feet, within easy walking distance for patrons and would-be patrons of the store.

The thrift shop is currently located in Ann Arbor's oldest standing commercial structure, the Anson Brown building, put up in 1832 by an ambitious settler from New York. He chose "Lower Town" (as the north side was then known) as a place across the river from the already established downtown of Ann Arbor. His aim was to eclipse Ann Arbor in growth, and some of the names he gave surrounding streets (Broadway, Wall St.) betray his wish to create an inland New York City. In 1834 the cholera epidemic claimed Brown, frustrating his plans, but the Greek Revival structure still stands. It is currently owned by Mrs. Grace Colvin and her son Thomas S. Colvin, Jr., former owner of Ann Arbor Bedding Co., which is now located just behind the Brown building on Pontiac. •

The Anson Brown Building, 1001 Broadway at Pontiac. Erected in 1832, it was the centerpiece of a fledgling town meant to rival Ann Arbor, whose boundary then stopped at the other side of the river. It houses a now-signless thrift shop.

A coat of paint totally concealed the warm brick texture of the old Earle Hotel, 119-123 W. Washington

c. 1890

c. 1900

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- *Michigan Pharmacy*

FARMERS MARKET
- *The Wild Weft, Kerrytown II*
- *Kitchenport, Kerrytown II*
- *DeLong's Barbeque Pit*

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- *Cloverleaf Lunch*

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Feature

Pressed Metal Ceilings

Pressed metal ceilings, the pride of turn-of-the-century store owners and saloon keepers, are once more coming into vogue. No doubt their increased appreciation in recent years reflects their increasing rarity. Those who own buildings with this antique ornamentation are now thinking twice before removing them or covering them up.

In this article, Pauline Saliga describes some of the many pressed metal ceilings to be found in central Ann Arbor. She provides a short history of American pressed metal ceilings, along with information on how they were installed and where they may be obtained new today.

By PAULINE SALIGA

At the turn of the century, a time when ostentatious decoration was prized, the ceiling was an important surface for decoration — the more decorative the better. One means of decorating ceilings was by installing pressed metal ceilings. Sometimes called tin ceilings, they were made of numerous embossed iron or steel tiles. They imitated the more expensive decorative plaster, stucco, and wood. Many buildings in central Ann Arbor have excellent examples of this decorative art.

Pressed metal ceilings were popular from the 1880's until the 1920's. They peaked in popularity from 1895 to 1915. By 1900 thirty-five plants in the eastern and midwestern U.S. manufactured this type of ceiling. Their popularity spread throughout the world.

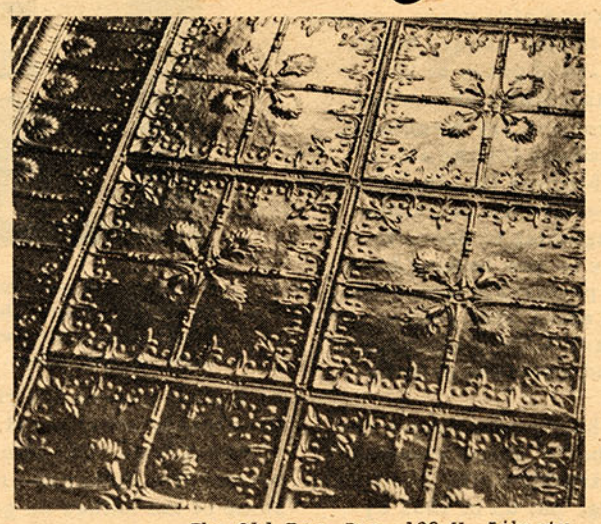
Durability was a major selling point. Pressed metal ceilings could withstand fire and water pressure from burst water pipes. They were easy to install and easy to clean.

When first introduced, pressed metal ceilings were installed in jails, insane asylums, facotries, and warehouses. Later they came to be popular in somewhat more elegant surroundings, including city halls, theaters, schools, banks, hotels, stores, taverns, churches, office buildings, and hospitals. Important public buildings, such as city halls and banks, commissioned ceilings of greater expense, typically of pressed bronze, zinc, or copper tile.

Pressed metal ceilings were especially attractive to store owners and saloon keepers, who wanted to protect their goods from fire and water damage. Metal ceilings went out of style before they became widely used in homes.

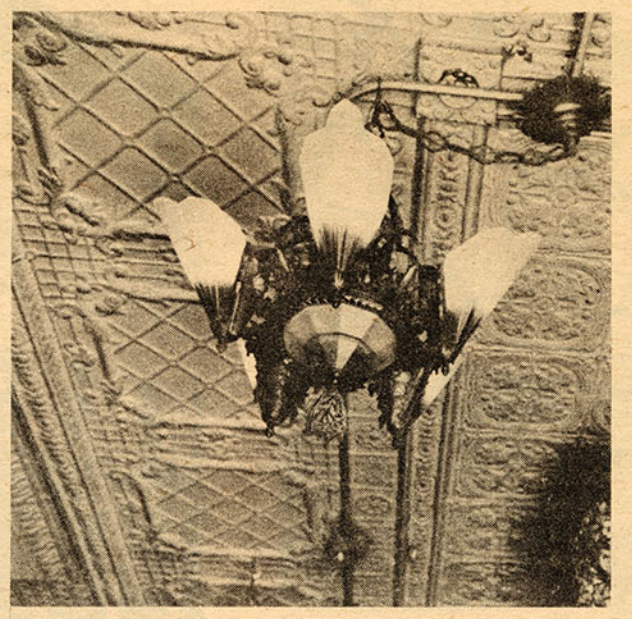
Once a Favorite for Saloons and Stores

Tin Ceilings Are In Again

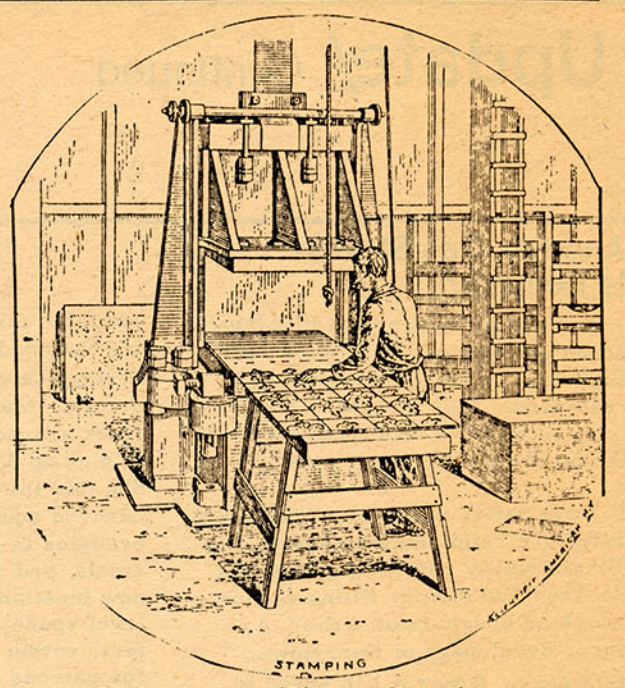


The Old Town Bar, 122 W. Liberty.

The patterns pressed onto the metal tiles varied a great deal. Some were lightly embossed, simple geometric patterns, such as that at Kiddie-Land on S. Main. Others were heavily embossed, ornate floral and abstract patterns such as those in Mr. Flood's Party and The Old Town Bar. Generally, the pressed metal ceilings in taverns were much more extravagant and decorative than those in stores, churches, schools, and hospitals.



Mr. Flood's Party, 120 W. Liberty.



To stamp the ceiling, a flat piece of metal was placed over the sunken die on the bed of the press. Using a foot pedal, the operator dropped the hammer to stamp the impression on the sheet of metal. The 2800-lb. hammer and die was run by friction and raised by hand after every stroke. (From the Scientific American, Feb 2, 1895)

Some ceiling tiles represented complete designs in themselves (Quarry Photo) while other others required two, four, six, or eight tiles to be complete (The Del Rio Bar). Usually one motif was repeated throughout the surface, sometimes with different tiles at the corners (16 Hands). The usual metal tiles themselves varied in size from two feet in width to two, four, or eight feet in length.

To install a pressed metal ceiling, wooden furring strips were first nailed to the old plaster ceiling. The distance between furring strips was determined by the size of the metal panels. Then the metal panels were nailed to the furring strips. Beginning near the center, the metal panels were nailed across and along the room, keeping the lapping edges away from the light. The manufacturers suggested that after all elements were installed, two coats of flat paint be applied to the outer surface.

Persons interested in restoring or replacing an old pressed metal ceiling or in installing a new one should contact one of these firms:

Engler, Meier & Justus, Inc., 1030 S. Vandustrial Dr., Westmont, Ill. 60559

Abbington Ceiling Co., Inc., 2149 Utica Ave., Brooklyn, New York 11234.

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Local History

Mr. Wetherbee's Boyhood - When Life Was Simple and Hard

Mr. Herbert T. Wetherbee lived in Ann Arbor all his life, and in 1971, at the age of 85, he began to put down in writing his recollections of his boyhood. The Observer is pleased to publish the second installment of his abridged reminiscences.

With few exceptions none of the buildings mentioned in the narrative still stand. In order to relate the memoirs to present-day Ann Arbor, we have added addresses in parentheses where they could be ascertained. Often even the addresses are gone, replaced by block-long apartment buildings, parking lots, or the approach to the Broadway Bridge.

By HERBERT T. WETHERBEE

My great-grandmother Clark lived about 1000 ft. down River Rd. (812 Fuller Rd.) in an old house, one of the first built in this part of the city. I used to go through the weeds to her home at times but I can remember her only because of a swelling on her temple, from which she died when I was very young.

The house was then occupied by an old colored preacher named Brother Whitley. He always rode a bicycle, sitting as straight as an arrow. Students used to go to his house to bother him, used to put firecrackers in the stove while he was busy.

There was a bank along my grandmother's lot on the River Road (later Fuller Rd.) side and I used to sit there and wait for my two old friends who would come along about the same time each day. Two old colored gentlemen who would always stop and talk with me, Joe Blackburn and Grandpa Bailey. They lived down River Rd. At this time the bakery wagon used to come along and the driver always had a pretzel for me.

The sidewalks were all planks (some just dirt) and they burned my feet, for in those days I wore no shoes in the summertime.

Going up State St., next to our house, lived Joe Burns (540 N. State). I think

"There was a bank. . . on the River Road (Fuller), and I used to sit there and wait for my two old friends who would come along about the same time each day. Two old colored gentlemen would always stop and talk with me, Joe Blackburn and Grandpa Bailey."

he was a bartender. At election time, in the front window was a picture of Grover Cleveland and in the opposite window was a picture of William Harrison. Next to Burns' house was a little one-story house which was occupied by a tailor whose name was Kopff. He was all crippled up with rheumatism and sat on a bench, sewing. He had two sons, Leo and Frank. Leo was also all crippled up with rheumatism, and Frank ran a little candy store next door. I sometimes long for the long strips of coconut, red, white, and brown--one penny.

State St. was the main street from the depot to the University Hall (where Angell Hall is today), and all the parades followed this route. Headed by a torchlight procession if they won, the ball teams were drawn on a hay rack by students up State St., and followed by the student body.

Across from the spring on the corner of High St. and State was a commercial hotel conducted by Henry Exinger, later by Hugh Shields. The Michigan Central Depot was built in 1884 and they were still working on it when I was a boy. Broadway used to cross the tracks on the roadbed, and later they built the bridge. On the corner of Carey and Depot streets, stood Mattie Newman's lunch room, later run by Christy Carey, where the railroad hands used to eat their lunch (808 Detroit). Next to this, going up the hill, was Gus Waidelich's saloon (802 Detroit) and next to it, built into the hill, was a commercial hotel run by Adolph Diehl. Across High St., on a corner of land formed by the three streets, High, Detroit, and Division coming to a point, stood an old house built with the sheeting put on horizontally. It was a two-story house with a mammoth chestnut tree standing in front, and we lived in the second story.

We finally made our second move, over into Lower Town, as it was then called. My father's parents lived over there on Broadway, where we lived for a short time, and then we moved to a cottage on Wall St. (908 Wall) just behind George Spathelf's meat market (1010 Broadway), and it was here that my brother, Frank, was born.

Grandpa Wetherbee was a war veteran and he served a long time. In those days it was not unusual to see women, whose men were in service, smoking, and grandma always had a clay pipe, usually upside down.

My father was a carpenter part of the time, and in his spare time, in order to get enough to eat, he learned to cane chairs. This was learned from his father who learned it from a hobo who came to the door one morning to get something to eat. In return for the food, he taught Grandpa to cane chairs and from this he finally made a living.

My father finally got a partly steady job at carpenter work and saved enough to buy a small lot on Traver St. He managed to get enough together to build a small four-room house on the land. Well, work went bad and the struggle for survival was so great he had to sell the house, which never got painted, for $500. So we moved into a little house on the corner of Broadway and Moore St. (1031 Broadway), where we lived for a year or so, right next to Herz's saloon (1029 Broadway). •

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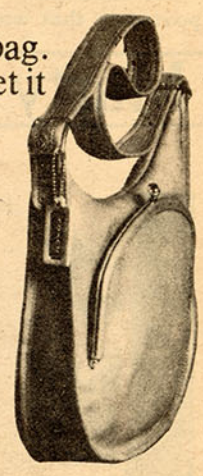
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Focus: Living Downtown

Although Americans continue to "graduate" to the suburbs, a growing number of young adults who were raised in the suburbs are opting for non-suburban living places. Many of them are going back to where their parents and grandparents came from, back to the city or the land, and interest in both urban and rural living seems never to have been higher.

It's natural that this new interest in downtown should focus on Ann Arbor, among other cit-

Dick Ahern: Home Is a Vast Studio

Independent architect and planner Dick Ahern has lived in a huge studio-loft at 336½ S. State Street for over thirteen years, and he loves it.

Fourteen years ago Dick Ahern was finishing a year-long journey around the world. "I was free to live anywhere I wanted," he says. "I chose the U.S. because that's where the challenging problems are, and I chose Ann Arbor because I didn't want to live in a large city, but I wanted a community with the cultural advantages of a great city — an outstanding library, concert halls, and lectures."

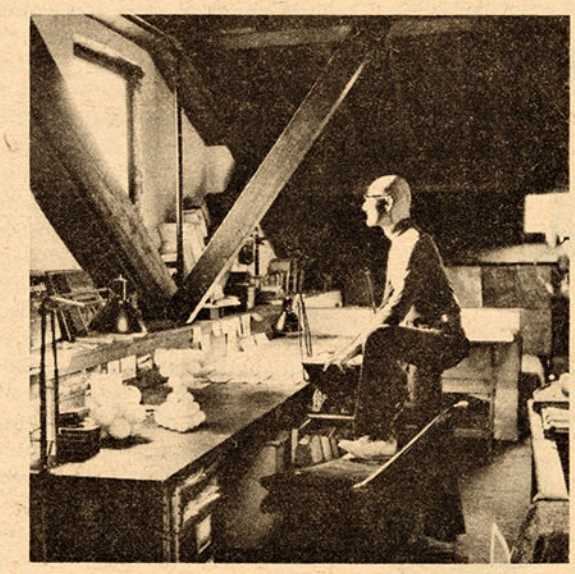
Dick grew up in suburban areas of Boston and Washington, D.C. "I didn't like suburban living. Never did. Nothing but houses. As a kid, I loved the juxtaposition of larger buildings and trees and people and landscape," he remembers. Early on, he discovered that college towns often possess that special mixture.

"Going to college at M.I.T. in Cambridge attracted me to pedestrian-oriented living," Dick explains. "Then I studied at Graz, Austria — an old medieval city surrounded by a park where the city walls used to be. I loved the medieval residential concept, where the city adjoins the countryside, and you can easily walk from any place in the city out into the country."

"Frankly, Ann Arbor offers the closest thing to that lifesyle I know in the U.S. It has the river, noble buildings (for America), and it is a city that's alive and growing, with all the cultural facilities within easy walking distance."

Dick came to town with the idea of achieving the ultimate flexibility in the practice of architecture and planning. He could utilize the generous pool of professional talent at the University's College of Architecture and Design. "This would permit me to be either a one-person office or have a half-dozen people working with me," he says, "as the job required."

He soon came upon an unusual residential opportunity that would subsidize his design work:



Dick Ahern in his work space beneath the eaves.

a vast, unimproved studio space at 336 1/2 S. State. Originally a ballroom, this large space has also been a mini-golf course, corset factory, used bookshop, and inventor's studio, he says. From 1958 to 1962 it had been vacant, without electrical, heating, or plumbing systems, and "it was ten times more space than what I needed." He merely wanted a modest work space, but the potential of it excited him.

Within a year he was renting much of the space to the five architects and engineers who formed the Ann Arbor Collaborative. Dick installed a bathroom and an ingenious radiant heating system, suspended from the ceiling down into the two-story high work area. Radiant heating made it unnecessary to install noisy hot air ducts or to cover the natural wood ceiling with insulation.

More recently Dick has sublet the studio space to architecture and planning students from the University who have constructed their own living spaces around the periphery of the great main room.

Dick's personal living space in the former ballroom is a converted boys' coat room of a dancing school. It's up above the studio area, tucked under the beams and joists supporting the roof. Rather than conventional furniture, platforms and pillows are used.

For sunshine and fresh air, Dick can climb out onto the roof easily. "That was a criterion of where to live — to be able to get outside at a moment's notice." The roof overlooks the Diag's activity and surrounding greenery.

Dick loves to walk, but he doesn't need to go far for most of his needs. "It's fantastic to have one of the world's great libraries a half block from your door," he says. "I reject places to go that aren't within walking distance. All last winter I had no need of driving my van."

"Whenever I want to get off by myself and meditate and contemplate, I go to the Arboretum or the parklands along the river. It's just so easy. I feel no need to escape the city. The open space of Ann Arbor is what contributes most to Ann Arbor's livability for me."

Instead of cooking, Dick eats out at restaurants, principally Eden Organic Foods. Living where he works eliminates commuting time, but life downtown has presented other difficulties for Dick. He keeps his van in the Maynard Street carport, where "theft and break-ins have been a major problem." Also, he says, "the loft has been broken into several times. Since Dooley's and Second Chance have moved in, the quality of life has decidedly gone down, with drunken yelling people who, judging from the way they drive, are from outside Ann Arbor. It's disgusting, the screeching of tires from the top of Maynard carport."

But all in all, given any possible situation, Dick Ahern says he'd live exactly where he is. •

Marty Schlenker: Continuing a 70-Year-Old Tradition

Marty Schlenker on his back porch, with dogs PeeWee (in doorway) and Blondie.

Marty Schlenker lives in an extremely pleasant apartment over his hardware store at 213 W. Liberty.

In 1906, when Chris Schlenker erected a new building for his hardware store, he included a spacious second-floor flat to house his family upstairs. Storekeepers commonly lived above their stores in those days of long business hours and slow transportation.

Chris's grandson, Marty Schlenker, owns and manages the store today, and 70 years later he now is living in the apartment. Marty had lived there as a teenager and young man until 1948. After his own children were grown up, he sold his extensive property on Earhart Road, and he and his son Jerry moved back in.

The big flat is now divided into two apartments, a three-room area to the front, and Marty's three-bedroom residence to the rear. The Schlenker apartment is bright and cheerful, fully carpeted and newly painted.

Living downtown is a matter of convenience for Marty Schlenker. To get to work, he merely walks down the back stairs from his kitchen into the store office, a feature that's especially nice in winter. And he can take a quick break from the store routine during the day over a cup of coffee upstairs.

On Earhart Road there was a lawn to mow and a garden to care for. Downtown the new, glassed-in back porch of Marty's apartment is filled with houseplants and some vegetables to satisfy his green thumb. It's a pleasant place to sit and enjoy the sun and outdoors year-round. Yet there are few household responsibilities to prevent him from taking a vacation at a moment's notice, with Jerry and the rest of the store's staff there to mind business. •

ies. Ann Arbor is a small city, without the massive problems of our nation's metropolises, but it's more than just a college town. It possesses a fair amount of architectural and topographical charm, along with a wealth of diverse and creative cultural energies.

Students and older people have always been significant groups of downtown dwellers, but now a lot of people are choosing to spend their most productive years in the city. Consequently, there is a strong market for better-quality downtown housing. Apartments over stores, for instance, had been considered undesirable ever since World War One, as the automobile enabled shopkeepers to move out of their upstairs quarters into single-family homes farther away. Today second and third-story downtown apartments are in demand, fetching rents as high as $400 a month for totally renovated units.

What's it like, living downtown? What is it that makes people enjoy an environment with more traffic, more pavement, and more noise than almost anywhere else?

The Observer asked five people in five different living situations. Though they cannot be statistically representative of people who have chosen to live downtown, their experiences give some perspective on living possibilities in downtown Ann Arbor.

Carolyn Arcure: City Life Offers More Options

Carolyn Arcure in her front parlor.

Carolyn Arcure and her husband Joe live in the elegant eight-room apartment above the West Side Book Shop at 113 W. Liberty. They own the building and worked hard over a year on its careful renovation.

Carolyn Arcure grew up in the Detroit suburb of Franklin, and she hated it after the age of twelve. "I felt I was out of the center of things, and I was attracted to the vitality of the city," she says.

Since then she's lived in London, San Francisco, Tokyo, and Ann Arbor — all livable cities, by her standards. In general, she thinks "European cities are more exciting than American cities because people live in them and the sidewalks don't roll up at night." On the 100 block of West Liberty where Carolyn and Joe Arcure now live, a lot of things are are going on at night. Rider's Hobby next door is open until 9 P.M. There are Art Association classes, and bars and restaurants.

At night and by day "the streets are filled with people you're familiar with," Carolyn says. "I feel neighborly with the people who work around here. There's a real sense of community. You know your neighbors on a different basis, you're not just sitting around in the suburbs trying to be a good neighbor. You know them because you do business with them — it's a more real exchange of needs."

Carolyn likes to shop downtown because "you have pretty much everything you need, and we'd rather give our business to downtown stores." She uses it for groceries, too: the People's Food Co-op on Fourth Ave., for grains and flour, the Farmer's Market and Kerrytown for produce and coffee beans. But she still has to depend on the car to get to the supermarket for milk and canned goods.

Parking's no problem for the Arcures. They have space for their two cars behind the building. Security and street crime don't worry them much, either. The area is pretty well patrolled, Carolyn says, partly on account of the bars, and lots of people are around during most of the 24-hour day.

Pets are possible, too. The Arcure's cat, Pangur, roams around and likes to hang out on the roof of Kline's across the alley.

Downtown is noisy to Carolyn, when the bars let out at 2 A. M., and the garbagemen are on the scene by seven or eight, ushering in a busy, traffic-filled day. But suburban noises like motorbikes and kids on tricycles are much more irritating to her.

Options mean a lot to Carolyn — options in environments, activities, people, and social roles. "When we chose to live in the city, we realized we also needed the country. There isn't one place to satisfy all your needs." The Arcures' interest in gardening is satisfied by sharing a garden with friends in the country.

Central Ann Arbor offers more options than most places. "I feel perfectly comfortable going out to dinner in Levis or dressed up. I love the locals and the people from out of town. Because you've got so much here (academics, businesspeople, etc.), you can play any sort of game and get away with it."

Where would Carolyn live if she could have whatever she wanted? "One thirteen West Liberty, Ann Arbor, Michigan," she said. When Joe graduated from the U-M dental school, they could choose anyplace to live, and central Ann Arbor was their choice. •

Frank Misplon: The World from the 26th Floor

Frank Misplon, who runs Training Development Associates and owns half of the West Side Book Shop, has been a city dweller all his life. He grew up on Detroit's near East Side in the heart of the old Belgian community. Today, after a brief stab at more suburban living, he dwells in Ann Arbor's tallest building, Tower Plaza, 555 E. William.

Screeching cars and other street noises don't bother Frank Misplon on the 26th floor at the top of Tower Plaza, 150 feet away from and 270 feet above Dick Ahern's loft. Ground noises are seldom heard above the 20th floor.

Up in his living room overlooking the southern half of the Michigan campus, Frank says, "You get a sense of looking down on a toy village. The Law Quad in the mist is like a medieval castle in a fairy tale.

"You get a feel for a much broader spectrum of the environment. One of the most interesting things to watch are the thunderstorms and weather patterns coming in from the south. I can see weather coming two hours before it gets here."

From Tower Plaza's top floors you can see far across the flatlands of Monroe County, past the Dundee Cement smokestacks next to US-23, to the water-cooling towers of the Monroe Atomic Energy plant. Up so high, you notice patterns more than individuals. "I can see hundreds of people at the same time," Frank says, "and I can find out what's happening

Frank Misplon reading in his living room overlooking South Quad and Crisler Arena.

across town — football games, athletic events, classes. I can be aware of them without being there."

Frank moved into Tower Plaza after selling his west side house. "I turned out not to be a homeowner," he says. "I wasn't interested in spending the amount of time to keep it up."

He likes the convenience of living in Tower Plaza. Almost every kind of store can be reached in a minute. Frank eats out a lot. Frank's Restaurant on Maynard is a favorite local hangout where you can linger over a cup of coffee and a newspaper after a meal. The convenient location and charge account offered at White's Market makes up for the substantial markup on small purchases Frank makes there, but he still uses the car for major grocery shopping. Generally he walks or bicycles around town. He uses his car only two or three times a week, compared to several times daily when he lived near Seventh and Madison.

Parking presents no problem for those Tower Plaza residents who have U-M parking stickers. After 5 P.M. anyone can use the bank lot and most university lots. "It's not like New York City," Frank says. "There's a lot of parking. You just have to know where it is and have a few alternatives."

Living in Tower Plaza is quiet (eight inch concrete walls between apartments insure that) and secure (there's a tight security system), but it's not really neighborly. The friends Frank has at Tower Plaza were met elsewhere.

Living downtown could save money, Frank thinks, if you weren't tempted to eat out and use expensive convenience stores too often. Frank spends more by shopping near the campus, he says, "but I view that as buying the time to enjoy the rest of my life." •

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Streetscape

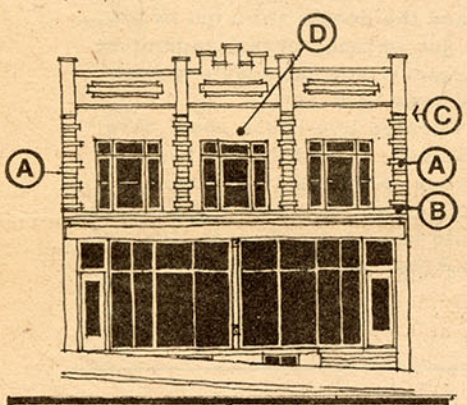
Cheap Loans Are Now Available For Storefront Renovations

If you have a commercial building in central Ann Arbor which needs exterior restoration or renovation, a new loan fund set up by Guy Larcom of Ann Arbor Tomorrow should be a great incentive to go ahead with the needed improvements. The loan fund is based on the generosity of the six local banks and savings and loan associations who will provide loans at 1/4 of one per cent below the national prime rate (now at 7 1/4%), significantly below the interest rates of current commercial loans.

The loans will be available through the Ann Arbor Development Council. The limit in most cases is $10,000. Call Guy Larcom at 665-0621 for details.

The Ann Arbor Development Council is a non-profit organization that can promote and fund development. It works closely with Ann Arbor Tomorrow.

The loan fund will emphasize "quality of work and preservation of historical and traditional building values," according to the Council. "The relationship of the facade renovation design to the architectural qualities of neighborhood buildings" is another important factor in selecting loan recipients. •



	PRIORITY 1		PRIORITY 2
A	Recognize visual importance of side elevation. Remove existing graphics	D	Remove paneling on front and Reconstruct original facade
B	Replace side graphics with new		
C	Remove side aluminum awnings and replace with cloth		

Suggested restoration of Schlenker Hardware by the Ann Arbor Tomorrow Facade Study. Businesses will more easily be able to make such changes under the new loan program.

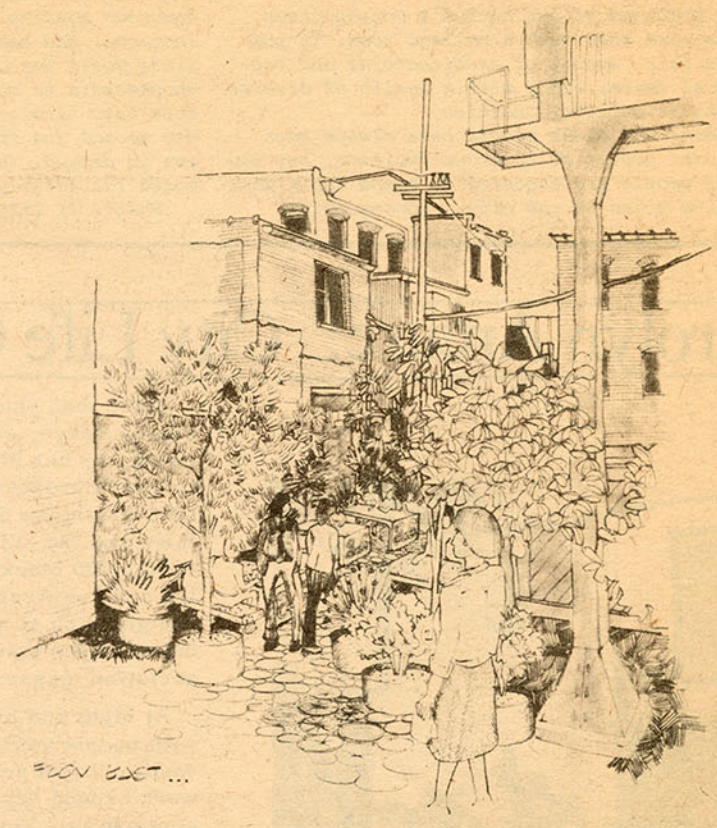
The Packard-Arch Park Needs a Construction Boss To Be Completed

Completion of the new park and playground at Packard and Arch (near the Blue Front) has been held up all summer for lack of a Saturday construction supervisor. Landscape architect Dale Sass of Johnson, Johnson & Roy designed the park and worked with the Jaycees' volunteers on the first stages. But he is now spending much of his time on a new town construction project in Saudi Arabia, and therefore can no longer supervise construction of the park.

Funds are available to complete the park project, but not to hire a coordinator at the going rates. The Jaycees are ready to go to work, and a play structure is waiting to be installed. But without a coordinator with some landscaping and construction experience and the ability to read contract drawings, progress is at a standstill.

Sass says the job would be extremely helpful experience for a landscape architect, and some sort of flat fee arrangement might be possible. He would go over the construction documents and be available from time to time.

For further information, contact Clint Smith at 994-3382. •



Architect's conception of alley improvements (Hobbs and Black Associates). Depicted at left are the backs of the Chamber of Commerce offices, Metzger's Restaurant, and Harry's Army Surplus.

A Downtown Alley May Come Alive

Developing central Ann Arbor's alleyways into pleasant pedestrian walkways with landscaping and seating has been a pipe dream so far. But if a group of owners and tenants on one city block can follow their ideas through, that dream could come true.

It all started when Dannon Yogurt public relations people contacted Huron Valley National Bank, offering to donate $2,000 (if the bank would match it) for the purpose of some sort of community beautification project. The Ann Arbor Tomorrow Restoration Committee, headed by Bonnie DeLoof, suggested the alley running from Fifth Avenue behind Fischer Hardware to Fourth Avenue behind Metzger's German Restaurant.

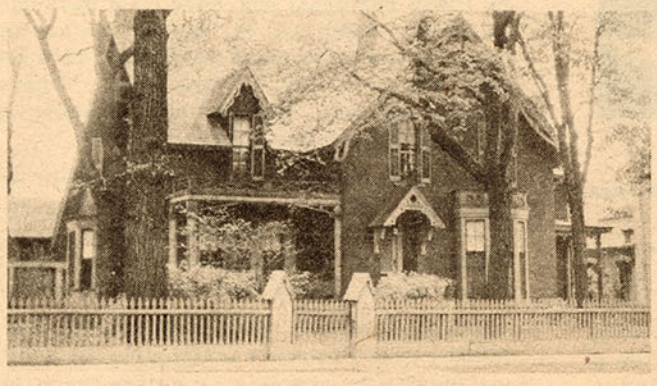
This alley seemed suitable because it has a central open space large enough for truck deliveries, with room left over for pleasant sitting areas. Owners of several of the adjoining properties, including Bill Conlin of the City Center Building, Bob Butler of 214-216 E. Huron, and Bonnie DeLoof and Estelle Schneider of 111-113 South Fourth Ave. liked the idea.

John Rozsypal of Hobbs & Black architects drew up some preliminary plans and sketches, and the idea was presented in mid-May to a generally enthusiastic meeting of tenants and owners of abutting property.

Part of the alley could become a landscaped rear courtyard. It would benefit workers in the adjoining buildings, who could have lunch and breaks outside. An attractive rear view would encourage owners to open up the rear walls with more glass and light. Eventually, more pedestrian traffic might encourage small shops and cafes to move into space off the alley (an attractive feature in Vancouver, Montreal, and many other cities).

For now, however, nothing is definite. The $4,000 grant money, when it comes through, would repair the potholes, construct special areas for garbage containers, and plant some shrubs and trees. Tables could be made out of telephone cable spools in the beginning, says Estelle Schneider. Schneider and DeLoof hope the grant improvements will be a catalyst for further privately funded work. Several owners have offered to paint or clean rear walls adjoining the alley, and to install pedestrian-level lights.

The parking of Fischer Hardware at the east end of the alley would not be affected. Parking is illegal elsewhere in the alley. •



The Douglas House at 502 E. Huron, built in 1848, now houses the offices of the First Baptist Church. Photo c. 1935-40.

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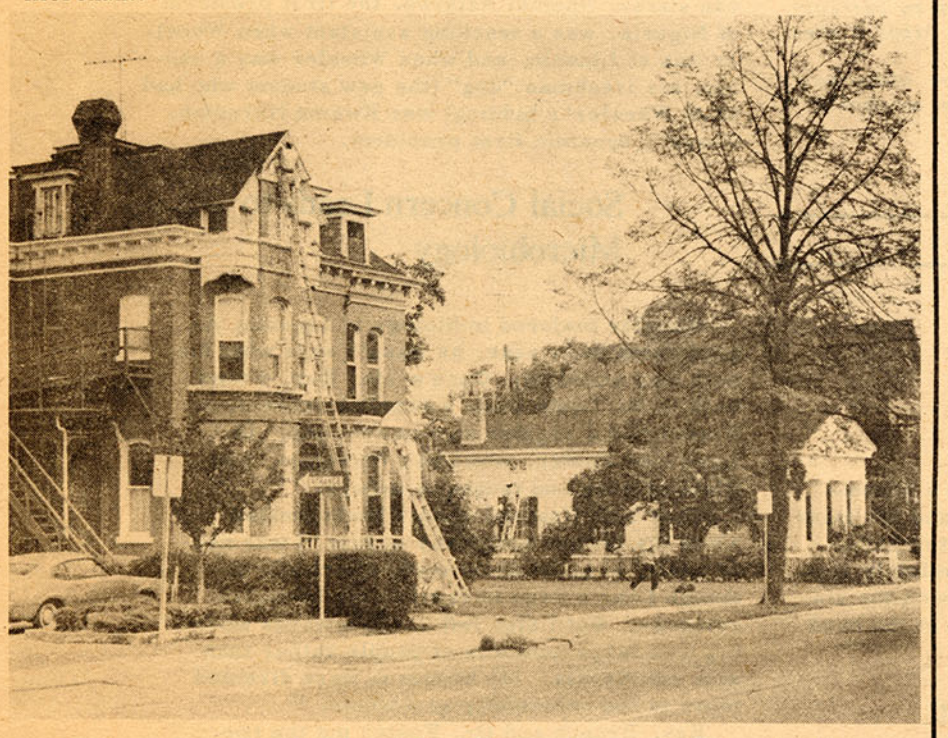
Streetscape/ Continued

Historic Neighbors Get Fresh Paint

Two fine old buildings are simultaneously getting paint jobs this summer: the Bennett-Kempf House, built before 1853 for Ann Arbor's first postmaster, Henry Bennett, and the Noble House, built in 1883 for Alfred Noble, a leading Main Street dry goods merchant.

The Greek-Revival-style Kempf House is now a house museum owned by the City of Ann Arbor. The Noble House, owned by Harold Lueck, is now divided into apartments.

Next time you pass the Noble House, notice the fine stone work over the windows done by Anton Eisele, Ann Arbor's premier stonemason of that era. •



The Noble House (left) and Bennett-Kempf House, 312 S. Division.

For foreign visitors and Ann Arborites, too

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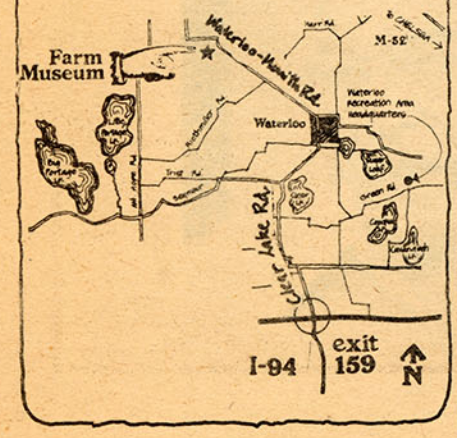

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Environmental Design

Doorway Details Make a Difference

This column will be a regular Observer feature in which a local design professional will answer questions dealing with improving the visual environment of central Ann Arbor.

Send questions to: Ann Arbor Observer, 502 E. Huron, Ann Arbor 48104. Questions will be selected on the basis of interest and generalizability.

This month a question about signage is answered by landscape architect Dick Macias of Preservation Urban Design, Incorporated. He has done a lot of thinking about downtown buildings for the Ann Arbor Tomorrow Facade Study and the WestSide Neighborhood Plan.

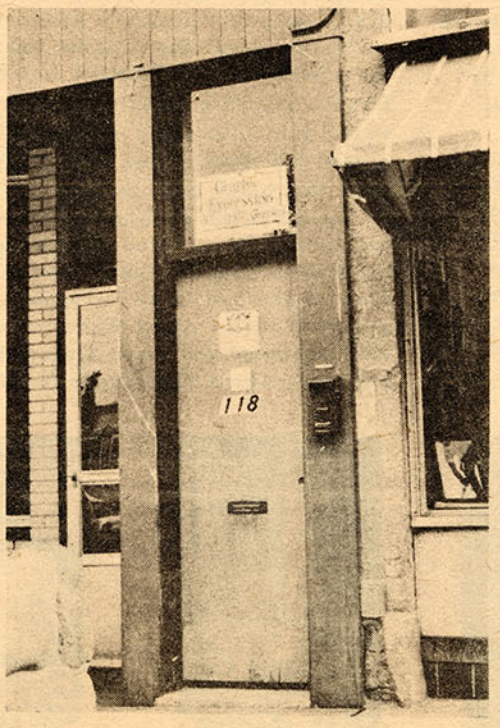
Q. Our print gallery (Graphic Expression at 118 1/2 West Liberty) is on the second floor, so only our door is visible to passers-by on the sidewalk. The present door is unpainted plywood; the street numbers are legible but unattractive. However, we don't want to invest much money in redoing the door because the building owner plans to totally redo the front in about a year, bringing it back to the spirit of the building's or original appearance.

Can we improve the appearance of our entrance for low cost? Also, we need a removable "open" sign that's cheap. I had made three nice ones, which all were stolen. The ready-made ones with day-glo ink on black don't get stolen, but they're ugly.

What suggestions do you have?

Ben Snidecor
Graphic Expressions.

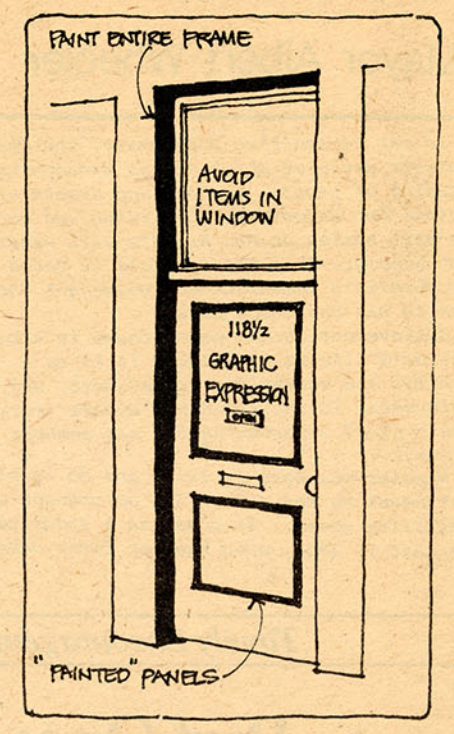
A. With the prospect of total building renovation in the next year, it would seem best in terms of economics to improve the entrance with a "paint only" solution. An appropriate interim solution would be to "suggest" an old door by painted panels. Old Italianate commercial structures like this typically used panelled doors in a variety of designs.



The problem doorway.

The entire door frame including the transon should be painted a neutral color, with the door in some contrasting color. In this way the total entrance becomes the sign. Accent lines about 3/4" wide should form the outline of the panels.

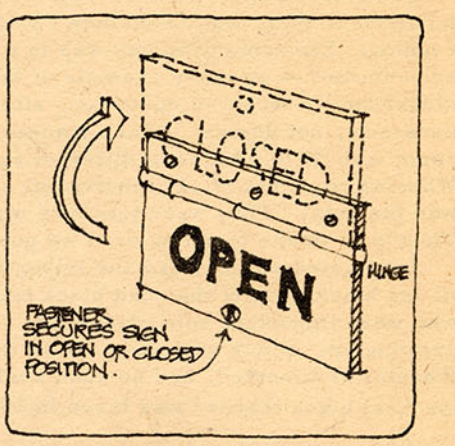
The information to be conveyed (street, name, and open/closed sign) should all be together on one panel as shown on the sketch. The letter style should be consistent for all information, including the open/closed sign.



Suggested design strategy.

Extraneous items around the entrance (such as the mail box and mail slot) should be removed or "neutralized" by painting them the same color as the door. Things like this tend to detract from the overall appearance of the entry. The entry is simply not large enough to support too many different items. It easily becomes cluttered.

The problem of changeable information can be hard to solve when a large sign or one with many different components is involved. But changing from "open" to "closed" can be solved simply, and the risk of theft can be minimized with a "self-storing" hinged metal plate that reads on both sides and can be secured in one position or another with one screw. The hinged sign could be painted in a bright color in its "open" position and in a color to match its background when closed.



The "self-storing" hinged sign.

The problem of visual clutter can be helped to a large extent by recognizing the necessary items of information and consolidating them into a unit. This approach can be used on entire storefronts, so that potential customers can see what it is most important to see, rather than having too much to look at and possibly seeing nothing. •

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Perspective

Mayor Albert Wheeler

In our Perspective Department, the Observer presents articles which aim at broadening understanding of people, issues, and events affecting central Ann Arbor. In this issue, we begin a two-part series on Ann Arbor's 54th mayor, Albert Wheeler, Jr. This article is based on Mayor Wheeler's reminiscences going all the way back to his childhood days.

Achievement is the major theme in Albert Wheeler's life as he related it to us — first academic and scientific achievement, and then achievement in the political sphere (working toward equal opportunity for all members of society).

Wheeler was born in 1915, and he is black. That means he has seen a lot of changes over the past fifty years. It comes as a shock to remember that in 1938, when Wheeler first came to Ann Arbor as a graduate student, the most politically-prominent black person in this country was the head of the union for sleeping car porters, that many upper-middle-class white families had full-time colored help, and that the military service would remain segregated for nearly a decade. Mayor Wheeler has been both participant and observer of the dramatic changes in black opportunities since that time.

This article consists of two parts. The second part will focus on the time after 1950, when Wheeler first entered local politics by participating in the revitalization of Ann Arbor's then moribund Democratic Party.

But first let's look at the man — where he came from and what early experiences he considers significant.

Timely Encouragement Changed the Course of His Life

Part One: Albert Wheeler Remembers

Al Wheeler grew up in St. Louis, Missouri, in a neighborhood of working-class families on the outskirts of town. Black and white, they were all poor. This early environment was an important influence, he says. "Just seeing people around me who didn't get very far in our society made a deep impression. Wanting to get out of that bag of poverty was something that was ground into me very early."

Wheeler grew up in an extended family. His parents shared a house with his mother's parents, and other relatives were in close contact. Wheeler remembers his family as less contented with their lot than most of the black families in the neighborhood. "They didn't like what they had or didn't have. They had the idea that the only way to get out of that bag of poverty was education."

The oldest child, Wheeler was the active and industrious type, who loved both sports and reading. Elementary school was in a two-room schoolhouse — an early example of the "open classroom" concept of education, although by necessity, not design. "Each teacher had a room with 30 to 40 kids of different ages," Wheeler remembers, and individual attention was the rule. "They were teachers who cared. They'd be pretty tough on us if we goofed off."

Segregated schools had one important benefit for black people: they had black teachers who were important role models for children growing up. Black children here in Ann Arbor, Wheeler commented, had no such models until the first black teacher was hired in 1955.

Wheeler's aunt in St. Louis was a schoolteacher, and he moved in with her and his other grandmother in order to go to a better junior high school. He participated with relish in virtually all sports in high school, was on the student council, and finished at age 16 at the head of his class.

A Turning Point

But that was in 1932, in the heart of the Depression. Though he had thought of going to college, Wheeler figured financing would be impossible to find. At this time a neighbor's intervention caused a dramatic turn in the direction of Wheeler's life.

The neighbor was named Rev. Branch. He had been impressed by Wheeler's industry — doing odd jobs and mowing lawns. Branch was also aware of Wheeler's academic success.

One day near the time he was to graduate from high school, Wheeler was asked by Rev. Branch what his plans were. Wheeler was able to tell him with some pride that he already had a good job lined up: he was going to be a dispatcher in a black cab company.

Rev. Branch encouraged Wheeler to continue his education, even though they were in the thick of the Depression. Having graduated from Lincoln College in Pennsylvania, he suggested Wheeler apply there. Wheeler was not only accepted and given a partial scholarship, but was given a $100 bonus for being the school's first student from Missouri.

Lincoln was a predominantly black men's college founded in 1854 by Presbyterians connected with Princeton University. Most of the faculty at Lincoln when Wheeler attended were retired Princeton professors, and it was one of the outstanding black colleges in the country. Lincoln graduated many future black physicians and distinguished men such as Langston Hughes and Thurgood Marshall. More recently, Ann Arbor's city manager, Sylvester Murray, graduated from Lincoln.

Wheeler remembers the Lincoln student body back in the 1930's as an interesting composition of blacks from all along the eastern seaboard, from Massachusetts down to Florida. It was a totally new world that made a big impression on the 16-year-old from St. Louis.

Lincoln had a significant number of African students, who as it turned out would be among the leaders of the emerging independent African states. Nnamdi Azikiwe. the first president of Nigeria, was a teaching assistant when Wheeler was at Lincoln, and when Wheeler was a senior, his freshman "dog" (the new student who had to do Wheeler's bidding) was Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's dynamic first president.

Social Concern Leads to Microbiology

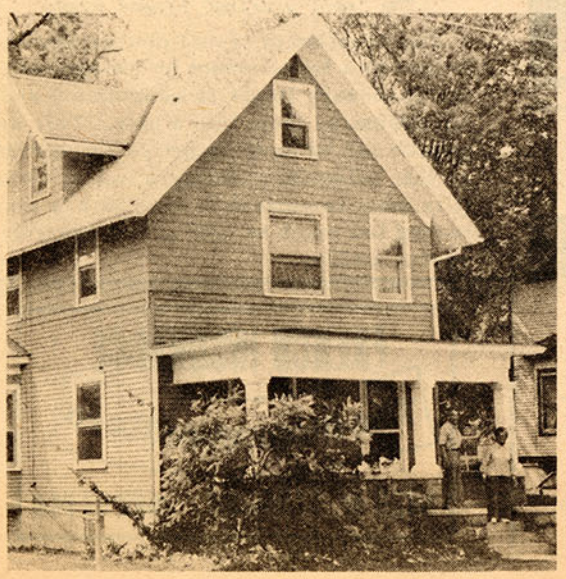
Wheeler majored in biology at Lincoln. As graduation drew near, he wasn't sure what his next step would be. Once again, Rev. Brand back in St. Louis made a timely intervention. Branch had a regular summer visitor, Dr. Lawrence Foster, who had a doctorate in political science and taught in college.

They both listened when Wheeler talked about his career ambitions — how "I was never really gung-ho about medical school, although I had a deep interest in the biological sciences. But I also felt a pull towards working with large numbers of people rather than with individuals. My concerns were directed more to the community as a whole."

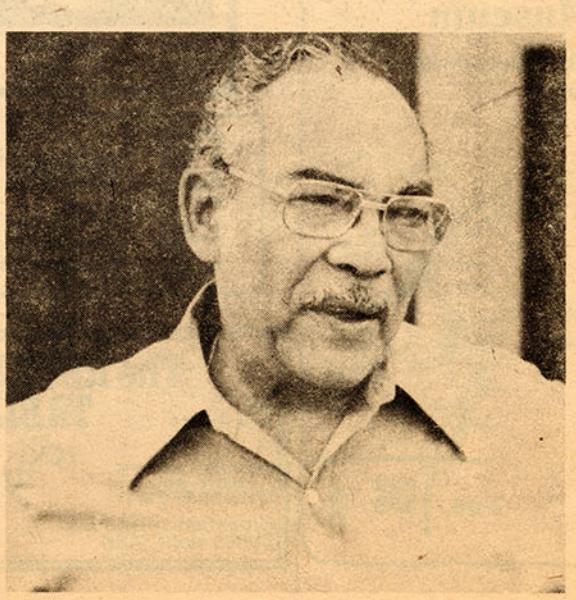
Rev. Branch and Dr. Foster put the two together and came up with medical microbiology, the study of infectious diseases caused by microorganisms. It was a field, surprisingly enough, that had interested Wheeler since his high school days, when he had read Paul de Kruif's The Microbe Hunters. He recalls that "it intrigued me that there were these tiny living things that caused epidemics of diseases."

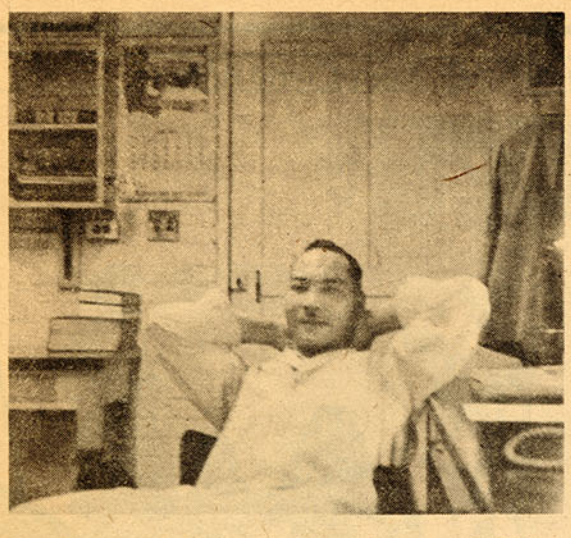
Foster suggested that Wheeler enter a graduate program in microbiology and recommended the program at Iowa State University.

Until he got to Iowa State in Ames, Iowa, Wheeler had yet to experience what might be called "culture shock." He had lived in essentially black communities and had accepted the restricted confines of that existence. But in going to Iowa State, he was suddenly plunged into an almost totally white society. Sitting down to take his first exam in graduate school there, the only black in class, his usual self-confidence fled and he thought, "What in the hell am I doing here?" Then, two things happened quickly in that classroom which stilled his fears. First, he saw another fellow cheat-



The Wheelers at home, 234 Eighth Street.





Dr. Wheeler relaxing in his lab, around 1952.

ing. Then the fellow next to him asked him for help on a question. This experience is vivid in Wheeler's mind. It was the first time he was directly competing with whites. To use his words, he proved to himself that he could "cut the mustard."

Living in Ames, a city with only a few black families in the mid-1930's, a fuller understanding of what it meant to be a black in this society began to sink in. Wheeler stayed with a black family while attending Iowa State (no blacks lived in dorms), and for the first time he became fully aware of what it meant to live not where you want to live, but where you are forced to live. Although he could mingle freely with his white classmates during classes, "once you left the classroom, you didn't see each other until the next day in class." While this experience was painful and opened his eyes to how limiting it was to be a black in America, he was not yet aware that there was anything he could do about it. "It made me look at things differently, but it didn't make me so upset that I decided that I'm gonna do something about it."

On to Ann Arbor

He received his master's degree in microbiology at Iowa State in 1938, and in the process narrowed his interest to the more medically oriented part of public health. Again with the help of Rev. Branch and Dr. Foster, he chose the University of Michigan to continue his education. So in 1938 Wheeler came to Ann Arbor to begin doctoral studies in the School of Public Health.

There were between 100 and 200 black students at the University at the time, Wheeler remembers, most of whom lived with black Ann Arbor families. Discrimination, although not as widespread as in the South or as restricting as in Iowa, nonetheless was prevalent in the Ann Arbor of the 1930's and 1940's. "There were restaurants," Wheeler recalls, "where you would not be served. You would not be asked to leave. You would just be ignored." And if you were foolish or ignorant enough to enter some bars down around Main Street, the word was, "You took your life in your hands."

Wheeler's graduate studies at Michigan were pleasant on the whole, but there were experiences which left bitter memories. "Some professors," he relates, "seemed to go out of their way to make it clear to the whole class that I was somebody different from everybody else. Once, for example, we had a laboratory assembly to observe an experiment. Several separate classes gathered together to observe. Before the experiment was to began, the professor said that the room was getting too crowded and pointed directly in the midst of the students to me as the one person who should leave to provide more room." That memory is still painful for Wheeler to recall. "I left the room. I was embarrassed and afterwards madder than hell. But I left."

Wheeler's assignments as a graduate asistant seemed to him pointedly designed to keep him away from teaching or working with undergraduates. But still, as he saw it, he was working, earning enough money, and felt, "I'm not gonna complain about that."

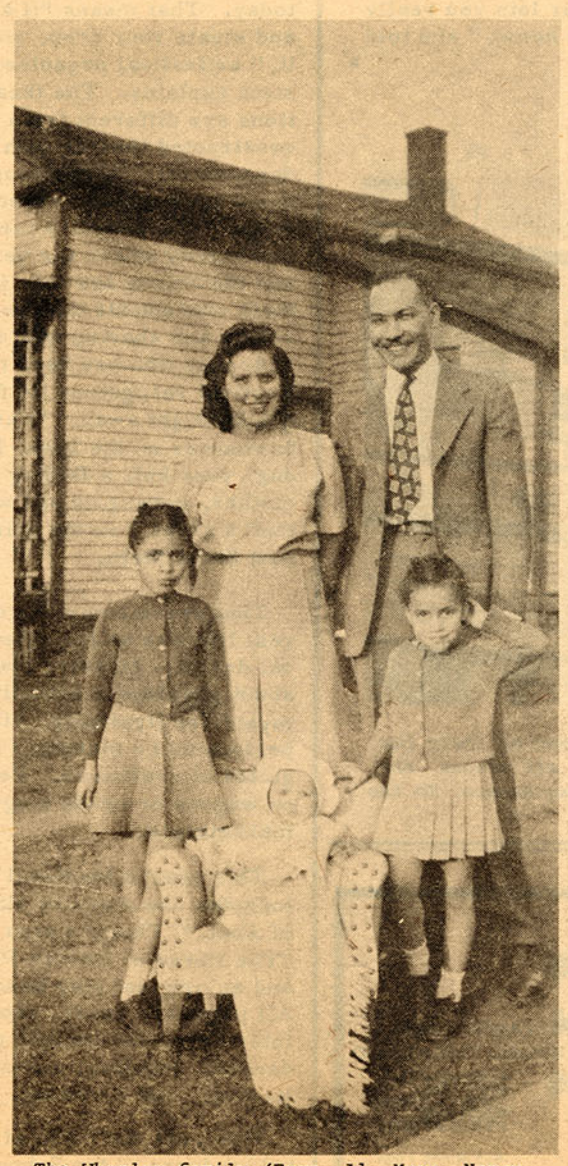
Dr. Wheeler Seeks a Job

Wheeler received his doctorate in Public Health in 1943 and set about looking for a job either teaching in a university or working in a public health program. Finding a job in public health was not easy at that time for a young black professional. After many inquiries proved negative, Wheeler happened to discuss his situation with Dr. Reuben Kahn, who had been on his doctoral committe at Michigan.

Kahn was by that time famous as the developer of the first widely used test for syphilis. He had an extensive laboratory in University Hospital. Learning that Wheeler was still looking for a job, Kahn promptly hired him as a research associate for his own lab.

Wheeler was to work with Dr. Kahn for the next eight years, from 1945 to 1952. He performed research to find a syphilis vaccine and to improve diagnostic tests. During this time he became increasingly frustrated that he was not given a full academic appointment by the University, despite his proven competence in his field. "I began to pester people about why couldn't I get a job on the faculty," he recalls. His initiative finally paid off. In 1952, at age 37, he was appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Microbiology and Dermatology, specializing in venereal diseases and medical microbiology. As far as he can determine, he was the first black to receive a full-time appointment on the University faculty.

Wheeler had met his wife, Emma, in the School of Public Health at Michigan, where she was obtaining her master's degree. They were married in 1938. Emma came from a very different background than Wheeler. She grew up in Columbia, South Carolina, where segregation was much more pointed than in St. Louis, and where blacks were subject to a vastly greater amount of abuse. Her background left her with even less tolerance for second-class citizenship than Wheeler had, and she was to become even more determined that they receive equal housing and employment opportunities.



The Wheeler family (Emma, Al, Mary, Nancy, Alma) in front of their rented home on Brown Street, 1945.

After getting his job at University Hospital in 1945, the Wheelers, who by then had three daughters, were in need of a home. Realtors showed them homes in the traditionally black areas of town, but they found none of these adequate and started making inquiries on their own. Eventually Wheeler found a colleague in his own department who was leaving town and about to put his house on the market. He agreed to sell his house on 8th Street to the Wheelers, who had 40-50% of the down payment already saved up. But even with this substantial amount of cash, the Wheelers could find no financial institution in town from which they could obtain a mortgage. It was explained to them that customers would complain if it became known that they had helped a black family obtain a house in an all-white neighborhood. Finally, the Wheelers resorted to a loan from out-of-town friends to pay for the house.

In the meantime, Wheeler was developing roots in the black community, which he remembers as a complacent community in the 1940's. Only a handful of blacks were even registered to vote. "They thought a good job was to be a butler or maid of the influential whites in town. But there were a few families in town who felt they weren't going to let their children get trapped the way they had gotten trapped." These concerned blacks would eventually form the nucleus of groups which would help change the opportunities offered blacks in the community. (End of Part One.)

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Culture

Ann Arbor's First Rare Book Fair

Central Ann Arbor probably has more people in the used book business than any community its size in the country. Thus it's not surprising that a special old book fair would be held here. Kaaren Klingel of Borders Books sends us this report on how things went:

Ann Arbor booklovers had the opportunity to browse and buy at the First Ann Arbor Antiquarian Book Fair held in the Michigan League from July 15-17. More than a dozen book dealers from around the state displayed and offered for sale selections from their stock of first editions, illustrated books, limited and signed material and book related items.

A display of hand book binding was provided by Ellen Fink from the Academy Bookbindery of Dexter. In addition to the familiar local shops, Charing Cross and the West Side Book Shop, there were displays by local dealers who sell mainly by catalogue from their homes. An American Library Association Conference on Rare Books and Manuscripts which met at the University of Michigan coincided with the Antiquarian Book Fair and swelled the appreciative audience for the event.

For the dealers as well as the customers it was a great chance to exchange book talk, compare prices and trade or buy items for stock. At times some of the briskest business seemed to be between dealers.

Altogether the Fair was considered a success and plans are under way for another this fall. It will probably take place in Birmingham the first weekend of November, so mark your calendars, bibliophiles. •

Asleep at the Wheel: Two Days In Ann Arbor

Their Ann Arbor fans were happy when Asleep at the Wheel, the top Western swing band in the country, came back to town to play at Second Chance July 19 and 20. Band members were happy, too. The group is accustomed to spending more time traveling in their customized bus (which sleeps ten) between one-night stands than staying in one place for very long.

So their two-day engagement here allowed them to spread out awhile in the Ann Arbor Inn. Lead singer Ray Benson headed straight for his favorite eatery, the Fleetwood Diner. Chris O'Connell, the group's female vocalist, could lie back and catch a soap opera or two. "Two days in Ann Arbor lets you really make yourself at home," she told us. •

Three members of Asleep at the Wheel, standing in front of their bus, which carries them from their base in Austin, Texas, all across the country. To the left is Chris O'Connell. Center is Ray Benson. To the right is the group's saxophone player, Andy Stein.

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The Middle Ages Come Alive

In last year's Medieval Festival mystery play, Noah and his family on the Ark have just spotted a dove, the first sign of land.

The Medieval Festival is a Summertime Treat

The outdoor Medieval Festival held every August in Ann Arbor is ancient music and mystery plays and jugglers and medieval costumes.

And it's also a special kind of "environmental theater" that is very popular today. That means "if a dog comes up and steals your prop, you work around it," as festival organizer David Bernstein explains. The theatrical conventions are different from traditionally-constructed theater with a climax and denouement. "Here people come and don't know what to expect," says Bernstein. "It's people's theater, in the community where the performers live, and the actors are less interested in their credentials than in enjoying themselves and sharing with the audience."

Anyone who has been to the Medieval Festival recognizes its free and easy quality right away. "Having the performances on the lawn, bringing your dog, your kid, a folding chair for your mother, getting up and walking around — that's great," in the opinion of participant Sheri Stein.

That special mixture of theater and real life was an important part of medieval drama. Mystery plays were plays about phenomena actually perceived as mysteries (typically, Biblical events) performed by members of each town's guilds of craftsmen. Performances were on wagons or crude stages in the town marketplace.

This year's Medieval Festival program includes one mystery play, "The Killing of Abel." There's also a French farce, "The Farce of Master Peter Pathelin," and an original play based on Boccaccio. All plays are short, separated by diverse intermezzi that include court and Morris dancing, juggling, a Punch-and-Judy show, jousting, and clowning.

This year the musical concerts will be held indoors in the School of Music Recital Hall on North Campus for better acoustics. Prof. Thomas Taylor directs the chamber concerts by the University of Michigan and Interlochen Collegia Musica. Authentic medieval instruments from the Stearns Collection will be played.

The first Medieval Festival weekend is a traveling show, in keeping with another medieval theatrical tradition, that of traveling players. The following weekend, August 7 and 8, the festival is held near the pond at the North Campus School of Music. There is a small crafts fair, food stands, and a special costume procession at 1 P.M. each day for performers and anyone else who wants to don medieval garb and join the parade. All plays are performed twice a day, so don't worry about a schedule. Schedules and watches destroy the more casual medieval conception of time, anyway. Just bring a picnic lunch and come to see what's happening. There is no charge for admission. •

A minstrel (Sheri Stein) sits on a rock and comments on the action in a play. Michael Filisky (the mime) and a small girl look on.

Culture/ Continued

Munch Graphics at Museum

The graphic art of the Norwegian artist Edvard Munch (1863-1944) is now on exhibit at the University of Michigan Art Museum. Munch is known for his visual expression of inner feelings, particularly anxiety and depression. Apparently his work strikes a responsive chord in contemporary viewers, as this exhibit has attracted more attention in the area than any other recent exhibit.

Dorothy Foltz-Gray, a local poet, gives us this impression of the Munch exhibit:

The exhibit, "Munch: The Major Graphics," contains 51 engravings, lithographs and woodcuts, including combined forms of those media, all executed between 1894 and 1920. This exhibit was organized by the Munch Museum in Oslo. It is being circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service as part of Norway's activities commemorating the U.S. Bicentennial.

The Hands
Edvard Munch

The bleak pessimism of Munch's art is well known. His obsessive mixture of erotic love with death is at least in part explained by his mother's and sister's deaths while he was quite young. This experience apparently left him with conflicting feelings of fear and longing, disgust and desire. This mixture of feelings, when illustrated in his art, becomes at times strangely whimsical and full of humor, though perverse and perhaps hysterical.

"The Hands," a lithograph in crayon and ink executed in 1895, is one such illustration. Groups of hands reach for the woman in the upper center of the picture. Her body is turned away, but her upper torso and face turn towards the hands. With her blouse off, but her full nakedness unobserved, she looks at the viewers outside the picture, a sneer sliding from the left side of her mouth and nose, a disdain that could almost become laughter. Her smile indicates that the hands, despite their yearning, are impotent. The viewer, realizing the woman is not threatened or afraid, can then join in her sneering laughter, the way one can laugh after a near fright fright.

The other surprise of the exhibit is the use of bright color in the graphics. Most are black and white, but a few make use of bright red, green, yellow, and blue. This is interesting not only because of how color affects expression, but because Munch devised a method of using several colors with just one wood block by cutting the block apart for separate colors and then refitting the pieces like a puzzle.

The pictures as a group represent isolation, but they are never remote from artist or viewer in their impact. •

Food & Drink

A Visit with the Pickle Packers

New to the enticing collection of specialty food shops making up Kerrytown I, at Fifth Ave. and Detroit St., is the wood-beamed, open-sided establishment of "Pickerman the Pickle Packer." A lot of Farmers Market and Kerrytown shoppers have suddenly discovered during the past few months that they have a strong craving for a kosher dill or a raisin bagel while strolling by the new pickle place.

Pickerman's is the most recent project of Leonard and Ruby Dennison, native New Yorkers who have been Ann Arbor residents for four and one half years. It is their goal to assemble a collection of pickled and related products that are new to the taste buds of even experienced and well-traveled serious eaters in Ann Arbor.

The specialty of the house, as might be guessed, is PICKLES — barrel-cured New York kosher dills of varying ages, sizes, and flavors. The typical grocery-store pickles are cold-packed and cured in the jar.

Also featured are sweet gherkins, dill tomatoes, and peppers in various preparations. Most of the supplies come from a single manufacturer (yes, that's correct, a manufacturer) of pickles in New York, though the Dennisons are gradually adding an assortment of olives and peppers from Spain, Greece, Morocco, and other places. A recent visitor sampled a marinated Greek eggplant appetizer that was, if not subtle, very memorable for its briney bath.

Salad fanciers will want to check on the assortment of delicacies in the refrigerated display case, and devotees of sauerkraut might want to sample the varieties on sale: the proprietors wax eloquent on the subtle differences in sauerkraut the way some people go on about vintage wines.

Leonard and Ruby Dennison, the enthusiastic proprietors of Pickerman the Pickle Packer.

The Dennisons' food service career in Ann Arbor has not been without some setbacks, but they nevertheless claim a large following from their previous ownership of the Vaudeville Deli on State St.

And if all goes well, they will soon launch a new venture, a subscription-only "gourmet club" which will provide members with monthly samples of new-to-the-area exotic foods from all over the world. For a yearly fee of $12.50, members will be given 25 Pickerman dollars to spend trying their new foods.

In the meantime, the Dennison's continue to add offerings to their display (knishes, meat pies, spices)) which contribute to making Pickerman's an attractive stop during a visit to the market area.

(One note for serious bagel people: bagels, 15¢ each, arrive fresh from Toledo on Saturday mornings, and some are frozen for sale on the following Wednesday.) •

Excerpts from applerose tasty tidbits

by Julian Moody

You've had the unbeatable PARTY MIX and the RITZ MIX . . . those irresistable raw nut, raisin and coconut blends in the cooler. Well, inspired by the old favorite STAN'S SNACK (the roasted nut and raisin blend), we have brewed up the

CURRANT EVENT. . .

Just try it. Just see if you can get it home without thrusting your greedy little paw into the helpless little plastic bag long before you reach your your doorstep. Roasted soybeans, currants and mixed seeds and nuts. . . Mm-mmm!

Tasty Tidbits is Julian's biweekly newsletter about health and nutrition featuring Applerose merchandise. Get it at APPLEROSE, 300 W. LIBERTY (open 9–6).

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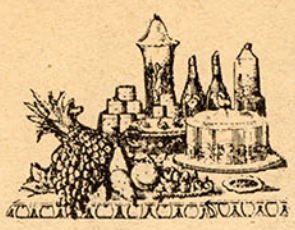

Food & Drink

Gobel's Snappy Service Is Becoming The Central Cafe

In early August Gobel's Snappy Service, the small lunch counter at 334 S. Main next to the Elks Club, will become The Central Cafe.

Craig Pepple and Raul Perdomo have bought the business from Gobel Hadley. Pepple, a graduate of the Washtenaw Community College culinary program, has tended bar at Mr. Flood's Party for four years. Perdomo has been Flood's general manager over five years; Tony Veit will succeed him.

Pepple and Perdomo have been looking for a restaurant for years, and they have big plans for "The Central," as they prefer to call it.

The restaurant's distinctive exterior, little altered since it was built early in the 1930's, will remain as is, a classic type of American vernacular architecture. Inside the lunch counter will be removed, and tables seating 40 will be installed. "Our decor will be clean and thirtyish in feeling, but not true to period," Pepple said. The walkway alongside the restaurant, which connects Main Street and the Ashley Street parking lot, will be improved with brick pavement and a vine-covered arbor.

But it's food that counts, Pepple emphasized. "It will be basic diner fast food. We want to do goulash with a hard roll as a standard, instead of chili. There'll possibly be an International Day with specialties such as a curry dish, or South American dishes inspired by Raul's Venezuelan food sense." •

DeLong's BAR-B-Q PIT

— HOURS —
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11 AM TO 2 AM
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Dinners

Ribs–small end	3.90
Ribs–medium end	3.60
Slab of Ribs	6.75
Bar-B-Q Beef	3.80
Bar-B-Q Pork	3.60
Bar-B-Q Chicken	3.00
Fried Chicken	2.80
Shrimp	3.00
Scallop	3.25
Oyster	3.25
Fish Filet	2.60
Trout	2.60

Sandwiches

Hot Trout	1.25
Bar-B-Q Beef	1.20
Bar-B-Q Pork	1.00
Polish Sausage	.90
Hot Link Sausage	.90
Fish	.70
Chicken	1.25
Corned Beef	1.40
Pork Chop	1.25

All dinners served with french fries, cole slaw, and bread.

SIDE ORDERS

Southern Style Fried Chicken		French Fries	.55
by the Box (9 pieces)	4.40	Potato Salad	
by the Bucket (15 pieces)	6.90	medium size	.65
by the Bucket (21 pieces)	8.90	½ pint	.80
Shrimp –½ lb.	3.40	1 pint	1.60
–1 lb.	6.80	Cole Slaw	
Prices		small	.15
for Pick-Up Orders Only		medium	.45
		½ pint	.70
		1 pint	1.40
		Onion Rings	.65
		Sweet Potato Pie	.50
		Bean Pie	.60

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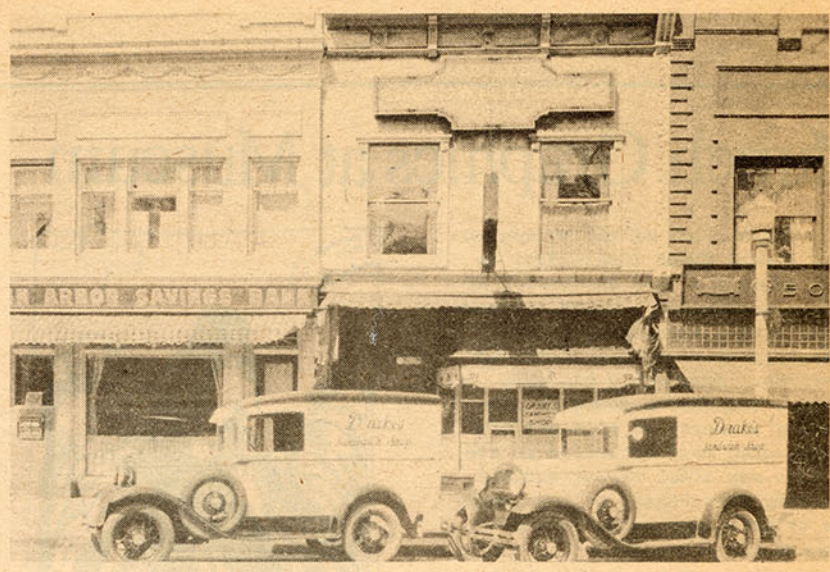


One of Mr. Tibbals' ideas in the 1930's was to deliver sandwiches and drinks to those who phoned in orders. He did a lucrative business until other sandwich shops copied the idea and cut in on his market.

Truman Tibbals' Business Trip

Sixty-nine-year old Truman Tibbals is back again from one of his candy-hunting missions, the sort of trip that has made his Drake's Sandwich Shop a connoisseur's source of candy in the area. This time he went to the National Fancy Food and Confection Show, which was held June 27-30 in New York City. It was a giant affair, with over 1000 different manufacturers from across the world displaying samples of their candies and other fancy foods. Although Mr. Tibbals was one of the smaller buyers at the show, he was probably one of the more discriminating and eclectic of those lucky people whose buyers' status permitted them to go from booth to booth nibbling the samples.

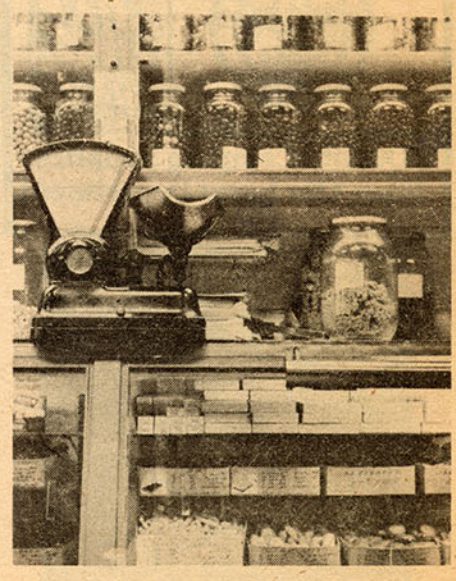
It was the 50th such trip in 20 years for Mr. Tibbals, who started to work at Drake's in 1924 (he eventually bought the shop in 1932). Although he has kept the place looking much as it did 50 years years ago, Mr. Tibbals has been an adept innovator over the years, showing a shrewd sense of Ann Arbor tastes. He was the first in the area to deliver sandwiches and drink to the Ann Arbor community (from 1930-1935). During World War II, when sugar-rationing drastically curtailed his soda-fountain sales, he marketed specially purchased stuffed animals directly from a New York manufacturer and started a local craze. His M-Burger (which had specially grilled onions copied from the early Castle hamburger chain) was a campus favorite in the 1950's.

In the late 1950's, as competing shops cut into sales, Mr. Tibbals further diversified his product line, this time into assorted candies. Having a sweet tooth himself, this proved to be an especially agreeable enterprise. Each of the 400 different candies he offers in his sandwich shop is personally selected. He eschews the easier course of trusting a given manufacturer's reputation. "Almost every major manufacturer," he says, "offers some exceptional candies along with some junk. One will have excellent chocolate covered cherries but poor mints. Another will have good creams but lousy caramels."

On each trip to candy exhibitions, Mr. Tibbals searches for the most appealing candies he can find to fill the glass jars in his shop. From five to fifteen new types of candy are typically ordered on such a trip, and if a newly selected candy proves popular with the customers, it will be re-ordered. "Banana hay stacks," Butterscotch rock road," and "mint swirls" are some of the new varieties purchased on his recent trip. His prize catch this time was a super-thin mint made in Germany. "There are thin mints on the market," he explained, "but this is paper thin — a wonderful piece of candy."

Although many of the candies Mr. Tibbals sells are exotic in name and composition, his own favorite is good, pure dark chocolate. The best chocolate manufacturer in the county, he claims, is the Merkens Chocolate Co. of Mansfield, Mass. His own favorites notwithstanding, Mr. Tibbals is unsentimental when it comes to decisions about which candies to continue stocking. "If they don't move, out they go," he says flatly. Currently the customers' favorites at Drake's are "White chocolate covered pretzels," "White almond bark," and "Almond butter crunch." The perennial favorite — more for looks than taste — is "Moon rocks" (once called "Rock candy" before the space age). Their resemblance to colored glacial stones could fool all but geologists.

The care Mr. Tibbals has given to selecting his candies has paid off in the large volume of candy his small shop sells. He now sells about 35,000 pounds of it a year. •



A portion of Drake's extensive selection of candies.